



Ye Must Be Born Again!

by David J. Stewart | April 2005 | Updated June 2017

What Does It Mean To Be “Born Again”?

This term “born again” first appears in the Bible in John chapter three...

“There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again” (John 3:1-7).

An unsaved man once said to me, “That born again stuff makes no sense to me.” Perhaps you feel the same. There are “How To Be Saved” articles all over the internet (and I am thankful for them all), but many people want a complete explanation of what it means to be “born-again.” Why do we need to be born again? What does it mean? That is my purpose in this article, that is, to explain this great Biblical doctrine in layman's terms. Please give me a moment and I will make it as plain as you've ever heard. Most people have religion, but very few people

have ever been Biblically born-again. Unless you are born again, you absolutely cannot go to Heaven (John 3:5).

Simply put, to be “born again” means to have He (Jesus) Who is the beginning born in you. In **Revelation 1:8** Jesus said, **“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”** Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, respectively. Man by birth is spiritually dead, which I will explain further in a moment. To be born-again is a miracle of God, by which Jesus Christ comes into your body to live, literally in the form of the Spirit of God. **Romans 8:9**, **“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”**

To understand what it means to be born-again, it is necessary to understand that there are TWO BIRTHS. The “first” birth is the PHYSICAL BIRTH when you were born into this world from your mother and father. When the Bible speaks of being “born of water,” it is speaking about the physical birth (NOT baptism). The “second” birth is a SPIRITUAL BIRTH, which means to be born of the “Spirit” (that is, God’s Holy Spirit). Why does a person need to be born spiritually? What is a “spiritual” birth?

The Bible teaches that man is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). There is one God according to Deuteronomy 6:4; but He exists in the three Persons of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Bible refers to this triune nature of God as the [Godhead](#) (Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20, Colossians 2:9 - King James Bible only). Colossians 2:2 refers to the Godhead as **“the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.”** The Godhead wasn’t meant to be understood; but rather, believed as sound Biblical doctrine by God’s children.

Likewise, mankind is created in God’s image in the form of a body, soul and spirit. Our earthly body is the tabernacle (2nd Corinthians 5:1-4) of the soul and spirit. The body is a temporary dwelling place of man’s soul and spirit. Our soul is composed of the heart (to feel), the mind (to think), and the will (to decide). **Hebrews 4:12** makes a distinction between man’s soul and spirit, **“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”**

Animals have souls, but not a spirit. Man’s spirit returns to God upon death. **Ecclesiastes 12:7**, **“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”** Animals have a mind to think, and a heart to feel and a will to decide; but animals do not have a spirit to discern spiritual matters. This is why humans have an inherent need for religion (God). It is

the spirit of man that makes humans totally different and unique from animals.

Man's spirit is dead in sin when we are born; that is, we are born void of God with an inherited sin nature from Adam. The only exception is the Lord Jesus Christ Who came as God in the flesh (1st Timothy 3:16). Our spirit is dead in trespasses and sin the Bible says...

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:1,2)

The unsaved person cannot understand God, nor His Words, because they are spiritually discerned...

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1st Corinthians 2:14)

The reason why you need to be "spiritually" born is because you have never been spiritually born to begin with. So when the Bible speaks of being "born again," it actually means "born for the second time." You were born physically into this world, but you were born without the Spirit of God in your soul (spiritually dead). Yes, God created you, but He gave you a freewill to decide for yourself where you will spend eternity.

God never forces anyone to accept Jesus as their Savior. He simply offers a warm invitation to anyone who wants to have their sins forgiven and go to Heaven. Salvation is a *free gift* (Romans 5:15; 6:23), paid for by the precious blood of Jesus Christ (1st Peter 1:18,19; Revelation 1:5). We must accept God's gift of eternal life or it WILL be forever forfeited when we leave this world (die).

God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. **Genesis 2:17, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."** Notice, God said they would die "the day that thou eatest thereof." Interestingly, Adam and Eve DIDN'T die physically the day they ate the fruit and disobeyed God's command. Why?

The reason is because they died SPIRITUALLY instead of physically. When Adam sinned, sin and death entered the human race. The Bible teaches that from Adam until present time, mankind has been born spiritually dead, inherited down from Adam's sin. This is why humanity MUST be born-again. This is only possible through the Holy Spirit of God, which makes us alive again (*quickened* the Bible says) by

faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior. We are saved by repenting of our unbelief and believing the Gospel that Jesus DIED, was BURIED and RAISED up three days later.

To be “spiritually” born means that God's Holy Spirit “quickens” us (or makes us alive). When a sinner believes on the Lord Jesus as the Christ—trusting Him alone to forgive all sins—then *God the Father* and *God the Son* come into one's heart in the form of *God the Holy Spirit* (John 14:23). The “Holy Spirit” is “God within us.” The old man is the flesh. The old man cannot be tamed. There is nothing good about the flesh. When we get saved (born again), the old man doesn't change. Rather, the new man (which is Jesus Christ) comes to indwell (live) within our body. **1st Corinthians 3:16, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”**

I have God living in my body in the form of the Holy Spirit. I was born-again at age 13. Romans 8:9 tells us that the *Spirit of Christ* dwells within every believer. I am not God, but I have God's Spirit living in my body. The Godhead indwells every believer. The Holy Spirit of God guides me, comforts me, teaches me, rebukes me, chastises me, convicts me, encourages me, empowers me, loves me, strengthens me, and so much more. The Holy Spirit uses the *Word of God* to do these things. This is why it is critically important for every believer to live in their Bible (and make sure you have a reliable Bible—I only use the faithful *King James Bible*).

A person cannot understand the Bible without the presence of the Author, and God is the Author. When you become born-again (or born for the second time), God's Holy Spirit comes into your body (1st Corinthians 3:16), never to leave (Hebrews 13:5), and you will begin to understand many new things for the first time in your life...

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” —2nd Corinthians 5:17

It is ONLY through the Precious Word of God that anyone can be born-again. Surely, no one can be born into this world again physically. There is no turning back the hands of time. However, you most certainly can be born again, spiritually, into God's family through the Spirit of Christ... **“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Romans 8:9).**

How To Be Born Again Biblically

The way we become “born again” is found in the Word of God...

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." —1st Peter 1:23

We are born again by the Word of God. Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:1,14; Revelation 19:13). The following statement sums it up pretty good...

**If you're born once, then you die TWICE;
If you're born twice, then you die ONCE.**

If you don't receive Jesus Christ and become a born again Christian, then you will sadly burn in hellfire for all eternity (John 3:18,36; Revelation 20:15; 21:8). Perhaps you say with the man I mentioned earlier, "That born again stuff makes no sense to me." Well, most people can't explain how a black cow can eat green grass, give white milk, and then it's turned into yellow butter—but they still eat it! My friend, you don't have to figure everything out to be saved, you just need to trust upon Jesus, the Christ, the only begotten Son of God.

Again, being born-again means having He Who is the Beginning (Jesus Christ) born in you." **Revelation 1:8, "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."** Isn't that beautiful. When a person is born-again, the Spirit of Christ comes to live in that person's body. **"Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Romans 8:9b).** This birth comes about only through faith in the Son of God.

The GOOD NEWS (the Gospel) is that it is very EASY to have the second birth, i.e., a spiritual birth. God came down to this earth 2,000 years ago and took upon Himself the form of a man. That man was the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:1,14; 1st Timothy 3:16). Literally, the GODHEAD became incarnate (Colossians 2:9—*King James Bible*).

Jesus was born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14). Jesus never sinned even once (2nd Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15). Jesus died, was buried and rose again after three days (1st Corinthians 15:1-4). Jesus shed His precious blood to pay for all our sins (Colossians 1:14; 1st Peter 1:18,19), and applied that blood to the *Mercyseat* in Heaven (Hebrews 9:12, 24-26). My friend, if you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the only begotten Son of God Who died, was buried and rose again for your sins, and you've made that your hope for Heaven by believing on His name, then you are a born-again child of God.

Jesus is the Savior Who paid for our sins. If you realize that you're a guilty sinner, then you simply need to believe on the Gospel of Jesus Christ to have your sins forgiven. Believe that Christ died and was resurrected, shedding His precious blood

to wash away your sins. All God the Father asks is that we come for salvation by way of the cross upon which His Son Jesus Christ died.

Forgiveness of Sins and Eternal Life are a Free Gift

My dear friend, what if I were to offer you a brand new acoustic guitar as a free gift, in exchange for washing my car? You'd say, "Wait a minute, how can it be a "free gift" if I have to wash your car to get it?" It wouldn't be a free gift, would it? Of course it wouldn't!!! That would be ridiculous. Yet, that is exactly what the Devil teaches through many fake churches today, telling sinners that they must turn away from their sinful ways, submit their life to Christ's authority as Lord to live for Him, and change their heart and life to be saved. That is NOT a free gift, is it?

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

—Romans 6:23

We are saved solely by BELIEVING [the Gospel \(Good News\)](#) of the Lord Jesus Christ; not mere intellectual assent, but TRUST. Ephesians 1:12-13,

"That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."

THE GOSPEL IN JUST ONE MINUTE

(Pastor Max D. Younce explains simply how to go to Heaven!)

Repent And Believe The Gospel

Anyone who teaches salvation or bettering humanity without including the cross of Jesus Christ is teaching religious humanism. No one can be saved apart from the cross. Having faith in Jesus is not God's plan of salvation. Many people believe on Jesus, but they have left out the cross. To be born anew by the Spirit of God you must include the death, burial and resurrection of Christ Jesus. That is the Gospel according to 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

Acts 20:21 states: "*Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, **repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.***" Repentance and faith are inseparable. Repentance is simply *a change of mind* that involves turning to Jesus Christ to be forgiven of one's sins. We repent of our unbelief, and from dead works of self-righteousness which cannot save (Hebrews 6:1). The words "believe" and "believeth" appear 85-times in the Gospel of John; but the word "repent" isn't mentioned even once. Obviously, the person who believes has repented. Repentance unto salvation does NOT mean *a change of life*; but rather, *a change of mind*. Repentance is a change of mind from thinking WRONG THOUGHTS to believing the Gospel.

Mark 1:15, "**repent ye, and believe the gospel.**" The object of repentance is to believe the Gospel, not to clean up one's life. When a man repents he believes. There is a popular false teaching in MOST churches today that says a person must try to stop sinning to be saved. That is self-righteousness. Why Did God Kill A Man For Picking Up Sticks On The Sabbath Day? (don't add to the Gospel).

Salvation happens when a person acknowledges their guilt of sin, and comes to God on the basis of being a hell-deserving sinner; believing on Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, for forgiveness. Acts 10:43, "**To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.**"

Jesus Came to Save Sinners!

You may pray a sinner's prayer if you'd like, but you don't have to. Salvation is of the heart (Romans 10:10). If you'd like to pray, simply admit that you are a guilty sinner for breaking God's commandments. Tell Jesus that you believe He died, was buried and rose again. Ask Jesus to forgive your sins and tell Him that you're receiving His sacrifice as payment for your sins. It matters not exactly what you pray, just as long as you realize these two main truths:

1. You are a guilty sinner in the eyes of a holy God for breaking His commandments!
2. Jesus is the precious Savior who died on the cross for your sins, was buried, and bodily resurrected three days later!

You don't even have to PRAY a prayer to be saved, just BELIEVE in your heart. But if you'd like to accompany your faith with a prayer of confession, you might say something like this...

Dear Jesus, I know that I am a Hell-deserving sinner. I believe You are the only begotten Son of God, the Savior, who shed your blood to pay for my sins. I believe the Good News (Gospel) that You DIED on the cross to pay for my sins, and that You were BURIED, and You bodily RAISED UP three days later for my justification. That is all I am trusting in to get me to Heaven. I accept your free gift of forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Thank you Jesus! Amen.

That's it my friend. If you BELIEVE the Gospel, then you are saved. Did you know that you don't have to "ask" Jesus to forgive your sins? That is 100% correct! Jesus has already paid for everyone's sins with His precious blood. That's why eternal life is called a "free gift" in Romans 5:15. **Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."** God has already PROMISED to save anyone who BELIEVES! 1st John 2:25, "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life."

Salvation is NOT a prayer, although you may pray a sinner's prayer to express your heart's faith in Jesus.

We are saved by HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, i.e., the

righteousness of Jesus Christ which is charged to our account at the time of salvation. This is the [IMPUTED righteousness of Jesus Christ](#)... *"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."* We are saved by God's grace through faith in Christ Jesus, because of the blood that He sacrificed for our sins. Our part is only to believe.

Salvation is not a matter of praying some special words. The publican merely cried out, *"God be merciful to me a sinner."* The thief on the cross simply asked Jesus to *"remember"* him, and Jesus most certainly did. It was their faith in Christ and not their words, that brought salvation. Both men acknowledged their guilt of sin and turned to Jesus Christ for forgiveness. There is nothing "magic" about the words you pray, it is your faith (trust) upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ that brings salvation. It is your faith that causes you to call upon Jesus to forgive your sins and take you to Heaven. God wants to save you more than you could ever want to be saved (2nd Peter 3:9).

Just take God at His word and claim His salvation by faith. Believe, and you will be saved. No church, no lodge, nor any amount of good works can save you. Remember, God does the saving. All of it! Man's part is to believe. God does the saving. Being born-again is a supernatural miracle of God in response to a man's faith in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's simple plan of salvation is: You are a sinner. Therefore, unless you believe on Jesus Who died in your place, you will spend eternity in Hell. If you believe on Him as your crucified, buried, and risen Savior, you receive forgiveness for all of your sins and His gift of eternal salvation by faith.

You say, "Surely, it cannot be that simple!" Yes, that simple. It is scriptural, it is God's plan. My friend, believe on Jesus and receive Him as Savior today.

"I'm so tired of churches being satisfied. Somebody needs to fire up for God and realize we don't have much time left. Jesus is coming again. We better charge Hell and we better do something about the fact that people need to be born again."

—Pastor Jeff Owens, from the timeless sermon titled, ["Our New Year Plan Glorifying Him."](#)

Salvation is NOT a prayer, although you may pray a sinner's prayer to express your heart's faith in Jesus. We are saved by HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, i.e., the righteousness of Jesus Christ which is charged to our account at the time of salvation. This is the [IMPUTED righteousness of Jesus Christ](#)... *"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is*

counted for righteousness. " We are saved by God's grace through faith in Christ Jesus, because of the blood that He sacrificed for our sins. Our part is only to believe.

Salvation is very simple—we are sinners and Jesus is the Savior. Christ died, was buried and rose from the dead. Anyone who believes on the name of Jesus for salvation becomes a part of God's family (Romans 10:13; Galatians 3:26). Eternal life is a free gift—freely given and freely received. Salvation is receiving; not giving. Our part is to acknowledge our guilt of sin and believe the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to be forgiven.

You see friend, there is no religion involved here, ONLY Jesus. The big issue is that we are all sinners, and that sin MUST be dealt with. The Word of God indicts all of us as guilty sinners. Only through faith in Christ can we be justified, JUST-IF-I'D never sinned. Those who DIE IN THEIR SINS without Christ (John 8:24) will stand trial at *The Great White Throne of Judgment* (Revelation 20:11-15). They will die the Second Death and be cast into the Lake of Fire forever. Those who DIE IN THE LORD (Revelation 14:13) already have eternal life. If you're saved, you're already a citizen of Heaven. Amen!

The Second Death Verses Spiritual Death

Please understand that spiritual death is not the same as the second death. Every man is born spiritually dead. We are already spiritually dead by birth. In contrast, the second death is being cast into the Lake of Fire forever. The first death is separation of our soul and spirit from our earthly body. The second death is separation of our body, soul and spirit from God for all eternity. **Matthew 10:28**, **"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."**

Revelation 21:8, **"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."**

My friend, please don't go to Hell. You don't have to die a second death. Because of sin we must all die a physical death (Romans 6:23), but Jesus shed His blood and paid the price for our sins so we wouldn't have to die a second death. Revelation 21:8 defines the second death as spending eternity being tormented in a lake of brimstone and fire. Is that what you want? The choice is yours.

Jesus said in **John 3:5** to Nicodemus (a Jewish leader), **"Except a man be born**

again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Being born again is not optional. Whether Jew or Gentile, everyone must be born again. Being born again is not giving your heart to Jesus. That's discipleship. Judas gave his heart to Jesus, but the Lord said Judas had a devil (John 6:70). Forsaking sinful bad habits is not salvation. That's consecration. Salvation is not turning over a new leaf. That's reformation. Salvation is not cleaning up one's life. That's rehabilitation. Salvation is not embracing the Christian philosophy. That's education. Salvation is **REGENERATION!!!** Ye must be born again!!!

1st Peter 1:23, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” We are born again by the seed of the Word of God. We've all been born of water (physically); but now we all must be born anew—a second, spiritual, birth by the Spirit of God in response to our faith in the seed of the Word of God.

Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every person that believes. That's the way to be born-again. Believe the Gospel and the work is done! **John 6:29, “Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”**

If you've never been born-again, you are missing out on a whole new world of spiritual understanding. **1st Corinthians 2:9-10, “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”** Once you get saved you'll begin to understand ALL THINGS and the DEEP THINGS OF GOD. Within context, the Bible says that the things the eyes have not seen, and the things the ears have nor heard, are the precious truths of God's Word.

False cults are formed when people try to interpret the Scriptures without the presence of the Author, Who is God. Once you become born-again, the eyes and ears of your spiritual understanding will be opened.

If you want to be saved, then receive Jesus Christ, by believing that He died, was buried and rose again three days later from the dead for your sins. Acknowledge

your sinful condition as **Romans 3:19** teaches, *“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”* We are all guilty sinners. I am the biggest sinner I know (and so are you if you understand the Bible, James 2:10). Salvation is about dealing with our sins.

Religion can clean you up, but only the blood of Jesus can wash your sins away (1st John 1:7). Religion wants to fit us with glasses, but the Lord wants to open our eyes. God promises to save the worst sinner, no matter what evil things you may have done, if you'll simply believe upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:30-31). Salvation is based upon the love and promises of God; not upon

“The new so-called fundamentalism is known for building bridges to the liberals instead of burning the bridges.” —Pastor Jeff Owens, from the sermon titled, “The So Called New Fundamentalism.”

[Just Shut Up and Get On the Ark!](#)

“The Gospel is not a call to repentance, or to amendment of our ways, to make restitution for past sins, or to promise to do better in the future. These things are proper in their place, but they do not constitute the Gospel; for the Gospel is not good advice to be obeyed, it is good news to be believed. Do not make the mistake then of thinking that the Gospel is a call to duty or a call to reformation, a call to better your condition, to behave yourself in a more perfect way than you have been doing in the past ...

Nor is the Gospel a demand that you give up the world, that you give up your sins, that you break off bad habits, and try to cultivate good ones. You may do all these things, and yet never believe the Gospel and consequently never be saved at all.”

SOURCE: Pastor Harry A. Ironside, from the sermon: **[What Is The Gospel?](#)**

Salvation is NOT found in a religion, but in a Person—The Lord Jesus Christ.

[The Cross-less Gospel](#)

[How to Know Christ](#) (The Inside Story)

P.S. —I have written [a 40 chapter book concerning Salvation](#) if you'd like to learn more. It covers everything from information about Hell to the precious literal blood sacrifice of Christ.

[Beware of Catholicism's FALSE Gospel](#) (which is the same as the Lordship Salvation heresy)

Also, [The Simplicity of Salvation](#) | [You Need HIS Righteousness](#) | [Salvation Crystal Clear](#)

[Dr. John R. Rice speaks on worldly Christians — Are they not saved?](#)

[Dr. Curtis Hutson speaks on Biblical repentance — Must a person stop sinning to be saved?](#)